

Matter of Fact

U.S.-Canada Defense And President's Trip

By Stewart Alsop

WASHINGTON. The Eisenhower administration, it begins to seem, has a remarkable propensity for putting its worst foot forward. However one adds up the pluses and minuses in the Harry Dexter White business, it is generally agreed that Attorney General Brownell weakened his case by badly overstating it to begin with. In other and graver matters, the Administration case has been badly understated—or not stated at all.

The queer thing is that the Administration has a perfectly good foot to put forward. Because of the furor over the White business, no one paid much attention to President Eisenhower's recent trip to Canada. Yet the Eisenhower trip was an outcome of a courageous Administration decision.

This is the decision to embark on a serious continental defense program. Present plans call for spending some \$20,000,000,000 over a four to five-year period on defense against nuclear attack, the peak to be reached in 1956. Intimate Canadian collaboration is a prerequisite of this program, and the fact that the President himself went to Canada to discuss this matter suggests the importance attached to the program.

Slower Start

Present plans do not go the whole way with the recommendations of the now-famous Lincoln Study. For one thing, these plans envisage a slower start. But perfectly sound arguments can be advanced for a relatively slow start. And the \$20,000,000,000 program—if it is not skimmed in the end—represents an entirely serious attempt to deal with the terrible danger of Soviet atomic and hydrogen attack.

Why then, has the Administration's decision to make a serious effort in this field not been announced, with a flourish of trumpets? For there is plenty of evidence that this is just what the country wants to see—a really effective Administration program for dealing with the dangers that confront the nation.

fense would be about half a billion dollars. Wilson was actually talking about the extra amount to be allocated to this purpose immediately. But he left a widespread impression that the Administration planned to spend no more than this obviously inadequate sum to protect the country against nuclear attack. Again, why?

Part of the answer can be found in the history of the basic policy papers—known as NSC-162—of which the continental defense program is an outgrowth. This history starts with Operation Solarium, as it is known in high official circles. Operation Solarium began with a dispute in the White House sun room about the relative priorities which should be accorded to a "sound" economy (lower taxes and a balanced budget) and to national security.

This discussion led to a series of task force studies of the problem, which culminated at length in an historic and rather heated meeting of the nation's highest policy-making body, the National Security Council, last Oct. 6. Over the strong objections of Budget Director Joseph Dodge, chief protagonist of a balanced budget at all costs, the National Security Council approved NSC-162.

NSC-162 concludes that the danger to the United States is absolute—it is a threat to actual national survival. Therefore national security must be accorded absolute priority. This courageous decision reflects the collective judgment of the highest officials in the Administration. It is unquestionably a decision of which the vast majority of the American people would strongly approve, if the facts on which it is based were clearly explained to them.

Under the Rug

Instead of explaining these facts, however, most Administration officials seem to be busy shoving them under the rug, meanwhile fuming furiously about "leaks." One reason probably is that many high Administration officials, while agreeing with NSC-162 in their heads (because they are patriots, and

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There was a time when the President at least tentatively approved plans for Operation Candor, when it seemed that the Administration intended to tell the country frankly about these measures and about its plans for dealing with them. Now Operation Candor has been muffled down to a single speech by the President, date indefinite, now in about its thirtieth draft, and getting vaguer and more general with each draft. Why?

Again, Why?

Again, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson remarked recently that a "reasonable" expenditure for continental de-

Dodge in their hearts. This is natural enough, since the obvious implications of NSC-162 are continued high taxes and unbalanced budgets; anathema to the conservative-minded men of the Administration.

The net result is a sort of collective Administration schizophrenia. This in turn helps to spread the impression—largely untrue—that the Administration really has no policy at all, other than a policy of depicting the Democratic party as a nest of potential subversives.

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The Alsop column also appears in the Herald Tribune Monday, Wednesday and Friday.



"We Weren't Certain!"

—Messner, in The Rochester Times-Union



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attached

Have just seen Alsop article entitled "Contrails In Our Sky" which appeared Paris HERALD June 16. Cannot (rpt not) conceive any Sov intelligence agent could ever have packed into art of this size more information of milit interest to Sov Govt. I assume this comes from circles within our Govt and is being released on theory that Sov Govt ought to know it anyway, but I wld like to warn against release milit intelligence on our side on theory that Sov intelligence system is perfect and never misses. This is only theory on which I can explain our gen discursivness about matters of this sort. If it is released for reasons unknown to us, that of course settles it; but wld like to register my opinion that if this is not (rpt not) the case, then somebody is doing unnecessary favor of major significance to the Sov Govt in releasing such info to Washington columnists. In particular, we raise eyebrows at this chummy discussion of our reconnaissance flights. Russians may be aware of them but nevertheless the less they have to be talked about publicly the more comfortable we here wld feel.

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Matter Of Fact By Joseph Alsop

Red Fliers Casing Us

ANOTHER of those moments has come which most people in this country have hopefully believed never would come, even though their coming was logically inevitable.

In brief, the active reconnaissance of this continent by the Soviet Strategic Air Force has now begun. About six months ago, the Soviet equivalent of a wing of TU-4s, or perhaps two wings, moved into new bases on Kamchatka, across the Bering Strait from Alaska. Since then, the air reconnaissance has been going forward.

Four claimed contrails, the vapor trails left by aircraft flying at altitude, have been sighted in recent months. Of these claimed sightings, two have been dismissed after careful investigation as probably the result of special atmospheric conditions and cloud effects. But the two others, one on the north Alaskan coast and one in northern Canada, are held to have been the genuine traces of Soviet air reconnaissance missions. The Alaskan sighting, at least, is held to have been confirmed further by the evidence of the radar net.

This development is and is not a cause for deep concern. To begin with the sedative arguments, this air reconnaissance of our continent which the Soviets have now started is only the equivalent of what we have been doing for some time past. Our long range aircraft have been flying reconnaissance operations on the Siberian coast since before Korea; they have gone in far enough for interception to be attempted on more than one occasion. Equally, there can be little doubt that the Navy Privateer shot down over the Baltic a couple of years ago was also on reconnaissance duty.

IN THE CASE of the best-confirmed Soviet venture into our air—that in northern Alaska—there is even some doubt about whether the Russian four-motored bomber passed the off-shore line where it had a right to fly. For the Soviet Strategic Air Force to occupy bases in Kamchatka and to fly reconnaissance from them along our coasts is just as reasonable as for us to fly reconnaissance from Alaskan and other forward bases. In short, even though Canadian territory was certainly violated if the second probable sighting was genuine, there is nothing immediately warlike in this new development.

On the other hand, the development is a grim warning, and it is reasonable to be concerned because the warning is not being acted on. What has happened plainly indicates the growing size and power of the Soviet Strategic Air Force. It suggests that this force, if not a threat to us today, will almost surely become a grave threat indeed before very long. We probably have a little time left to put our own air defenses in order. But this is the beginning of an ending. And if we do not use this time which we still have to the limit of our capacities, the danger will be upon us before our defenses are prepared.

Something of the poverty of our present defenses is suggested by the fact that visual evidence has provided the main proof of the presence of Soviet aircraft. Even in the Alaskan case, the sighting of the contrail was positive while the blip on the radar screen was arguable. And in the Canadian case, marked as a probable, the Soviet plane appears to have found a big hole in the radar net.

THE RADAR warning system is being improved, of course, although the rate of investment in vitally necessary air-borne early warning equipment still leaves much to be desired. Still more important the decision has not even been taken, as yet, to buy the real heart of a modern air defense system—all the costly complex different types of guided missiles which are just now being perfected. And even the production of night fighter interceptors is being cruelly slowed by low priorities.

A previous series of reports in this space presented the details of this huge problem. In brief, a spurt of progress with such guided missiles as the Army's "Nike" has suddenly made it possible to build a truly effective American air defense. But even "Nike" has not yet been ordered in great quantities. And no effort is being made to speed production of the other promising missiles Air Force and Navy—as well as Army—designed, which will also be needed.

Essentially, this is because an all-out effort to build a truly effective American air defense will demand additional capital outlays of somewhere between 10 billion dollars and 15 billion dollars. The Congressional approach to the defense budget already shows the clearest signs of election year madness and no one wants to talk about large new programs which have not been absolutely tested. The trouble is that if an all-out effort is delayed for another year, the completion of the air defense of this country will also be delayed by a year. And these contrails in our sky should be proof enough that any such delay is intolerable.

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